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August 9, 2011

Dear Parents:

September is fast approaching and children from kindergarten to college are gearing up for a new school year. For parents, back to school means the end of carefree summer activities and a return to routine school days. For drivers, however, back to school means a return to slower driving in your community and especially around school zones.

With many newly licensed teen drivers resuming their daily commutes to high school or college, now is the perfect time for everyone to review safe driving rules, both adults and teens. This is an important conversation that parents must have with their teen.

The Rockville Police Department is committed to community safety and encourages safe driving habits. In an effort to enhance pedestrian safety we offer the following suggestions as the new school year begins:

### **Driving to school**

- Slow down in school zones.
- Pay attention while driving. Don't be distracted by electronic devices, cell phones or iPods.
- Stop completely at all intersections.
- Avoid dropping children off mid-block. This encourages them to cross streets outside the confines of crosswalks and the support of crossing guards.
- Do not park in fire lanes or other areas prohibited by signs. This forces children to navigate around cars and through the street or parking lot.
- Look for children walking or biking near schools, bus stops and in school parking lots.
- Avoid changing lanes in school zones and never make U-turns in school zones.
- Don't send or read text message on a cell phone in school zones - your focus needs to be on the road. It's also illegal in the State of Maryland

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### **Walking to school – Tip for parents**

- Students should have a primary and safe secondary route to school, always be in view of others, walk in groups and wear reflective or bright-colored clothing.
- Walk the route with your child beforehand. Tell him or her to stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there aren't many people around. Make sure the route your child takes is safe and has a crossing guard at intersections.
- If you feel your child does not have adequate pedestrian skills to walk to school, either walk with them until you are confident in their ability or make alternate arrangements for getting them to and from school.
- If a child is young or entering a new school, walk the child to school until you are comfortable with them walking by themselves.
- Teach your kids to obey all traffic signals, signs and traffic officers. Remind them to be extra careful in bad weather.
- Children should not expect drivers to look out for them; they need to take responsibility and protect themselves. Don't allow your child to walk to school wearing headphones or playing a Gameboy because this will make them oblivious to their surroundings.

### **Walking to school - Tip for students**

- Wearing light or brightly colored clothing increases your visibility to drivers.
- Whenever possible walk to school with a friend or a group of friends.
- Never take a short cut through a wooded area. Stay on the route you practiced with your parents.
- Obey all traffic signals, signs and crossing guards. Be extra careful in bad weather because it's harder for drivers to see.

### **Riding the bus - Tips for parents**

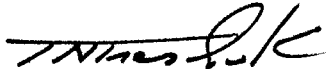
- Make sure your child knows their bus number. This will reduce your child's stress and avoid confusion on which bus to ride.
- Make sure your child knows their telephone number and address.
- Teach children to arrive at the bus stop early, stay out of the street, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the street, watch for cars and avoid the driver's blind spot.
- Walk the route to and from the bus stop with your child, pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they are being followed or bothered by a stranger. The safe places can be used if your child needs help.
- Parents/guardians should visit the bus stop with their child.
- Teach your child what to do if the bus does not arrive on time.

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- Remind your children to stay seated at all times and keep their heads and arms inside the bus while riding. When exiting the bus, children should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, exit from the front using the handrail to avoid falls and cross the street at least 10 feet (or 10 giant steps) in front of the bus.
- Tell your child not to bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes or pick up objects, as the driver may not see him before starting to move.

We look forward to working together to make the entire school year safe for pedestrians and motorists alike.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. N. Treschuk', written in a cursive style.

T. N. Treschuk  
Chief of Police

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